DROPOUTS SPEAK OUT

A STUDY OF DROPOUTS FROM TWO SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK

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SECTION I

QUOTES FROM DROPOUTS

"The teacher told me in January I had no hope in passing." - Grade 8

"I felt too old to be in school." - Grade 11

"After six years in Jr. High I had enough." - Grade 9

"The teacher was always on my back about something. He drove me out of school." - Grade 10

"I wish someone could have sat me down and talked to me." - Grade 11

"After four months in grade 12, they came and moved me to grade 11 because they said they made a mistake. I was passing at that time." - Grade 12

"Nothing much to wake up to when you're making straight F's." - Grade 10

"The teacher asked me to pass in my books-so I did." - Grade 10

"I just felt left out, like I didn't belong-an outcast." - Grade 10

The quotes on the previous page were made by former students who were enrolled in two New Brunswick school districts from the period September, 1987 through April, 1988. In this eight month period a total of 119 students left their respective schools by "choice" or by "chance"

Although this total represents less than one percent of the enrollment of these two districts, the number holds more significance when defined in terms of being the equivalent of four classrooms and/or four full-time teaching positions.

In order to find out more about these students, a study was initiated primarily to contact as many dropouts as possible, and to determine attitude factors which may have caused premature school leaving.

THE STUDY

The initial list of 119 names was reduced to include only dropouts conforming to the following definition: A dropout is any student who has left school before graduating and has not enrolled elsewhere in another educational institution.

This reduced the total number to 108 names. Through the assistance of district staffs, guidance counsellors, principals and teachers, it was possible to obtain the addresses of these former students, and mail to them a teen -service information brochure (See Appendix B), and an information letter requesting their cooperation with the study. With the assistance of a district attendance worker, follow-up phone calls were made and interviews were scheduled. (See below)

TABLE I

Number of letters mailed	108
Unable to make contact	27
Followed up by phone	81
Unwilling to participate	2
Interviewed by phone	20
Interviewed in person	59

DROPOUT CONTACT DATA

Students contacted showed remarkable interest in this project. For most, it was their first school contact since they had left the system. Some were somewhat relieved that the system had not completely forgotten them, and grateful in that they had a chance to tell their story, and perhaps help others at the same time.

An effort was made to interview the dropout in person whenever possible. This offered a more comfortable setting and led to a more relaxed and candid conversation. By contrast, surveys completed by phone seemed somewhat "rushed" and certainly less candid. As a result, many personal interviews evolved into lengthy counselling sessions concerning the dropout's decisions and future plans.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

The specific aims of this investigation were:

1. To make contact with as many current school year dropouts as possible, with focused attention on identifying premature school leaving in the junior and senior high schools, and the factors which cause it.

2. To assess the dropout's decision to leave school as an "informed" or "uninformed" choice.

3. To counsel as many dropouts as possible, enabling them to make that "informed choice", and to offer assistance to them either to re-enter the public school system or to choose alternatives to allow them to continue their education.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was modelled on the Cashion-MacIver Study (June, 1987). It was field-tested and modified three times to arrive at the final format. (See Appendix A) Other published research was investigated in the development of the questionnaire, which was again modified to the specific aims of this investigation. The Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts (March, 1988) was also instrumental in forming the structure of the questionnaire and the direction of this study.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The two school districts studied have a combined total enrollment of approximately 11,000 students, distributed over an area exceeding 1600 square kilometers. There are six junior high and two senior high schools. In addition, two other schools offer combined grades from 1 to 9, and from 7 to 12, respectively.

The socio-economic structure of these areas ranges from affluent entrepreneurism and business to unemployment and social assistance. There are no communities that have gained city status. Instead, there are remote rural areas and suburban townships all with less than 10,000 inhabitants.

The major industries of the area include mining, lumbering, and a wide variety of mixed farming.

This area includes housing for the very poor, areas of mixed housing, middle class communities and very affluent abodes. There are no large inner-city areas.

These districts would be considered typical of much of the province of New Brunswick in terms of housing and socio-economic status.

SECTION II

WHO ARE THEY?

There was some difficulty in identifying who qualified as a dropout across the two districts. Although both district forms identifying these dropouts contained essentially the same information, the format in which it was presented was not the same. Agreement on dropout codes and reporting formats across school districts would give future researchers and Department of Education officials more accurate information with which to interpret data when determining WHY students are leaving the public school system.

It is therefore recommended that:

1. consideration be given to having one standarized student withdrawal form used by all schools and school districts in the province of New Brunswick.

Any attempt to stereotype those who drop out of school would be extremely difficult and misleading. Dropouts include the academically gifted as well as low achievers, from disadvantaged as well as advantaged backgrounds. (Radwanski, 1988). However, substantial research on dropouts in the past shows that students in certain categories are more likely to drop out than others.

Male-Female Ratio - The sample group data showed that males are more likely than females to drop out of school. Previous research supports this fact, but the relatively high number of female dropouts was somewhat surprising, especially combined with the fairly low incidence of reported pregnancies in these districts. (See Diagram A)

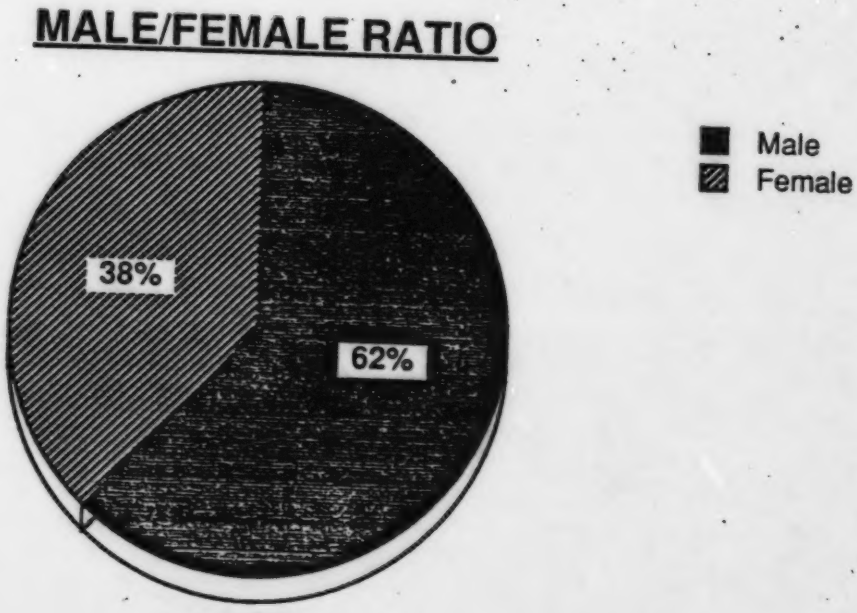


DIAGRAM A

This statistic is not consistent with the reported fact that the majority of girls who leave school are pregnant. (Cashion and MacIver 1987)

cycle

Family Background and Structure - Virtually every study examined has recorded a strong link between family background and structure and the likelihood of dropping out.(Radwanski, 1988). Thus, the lower the income level, educational level and occupational status of his or her parents, the greater the risk that any given student will not complete high school. Similarly, young people from single-parent homes are considerably more likely to drop out than those students from homes in which both parents are present.

However, the data used for this study is not totally consistent with that published previously for this area. Thirty-eight percent of the dropouts' parents did not complete high school, had low paying jobs or were unemployed at the time of this study. Thirty percent of dropouts lived at home with one parent, identified as the mother ninety percent of the time. Table 2 shows the breakdown of who these former students were living with at the time of this study.

LIVING (WITH)

Parent(s), Guardian	63%
Friends, Relatives	19%
On own	18%

TABLE #2

Level of Study - The highest correlation can be found between leaving school and the dropouts' lack of success in their English courses. In New Brunswick's senior high schools, compulsory courses end in single digits, ranging from one(enriched courses), to four (practical programs). In the junior high schools, English and Math courses that are less demanding are labelled "modified" or "remedial", and for the most part, these students would most likely follow Level 3 or 4 courses in high school. Table #3 displays a breakdown of the dropouts level of study while in school.

LEVEL OF STUDY

Level	
1	0%
*2	34.4 %
3	58%
4	7.6%

TABLE #3

*Note that dropouts involved in this investigation are not confined to lower levels of study.

Sixty-six percent of the dropouts studied were taking Level 3 or Level 4 courses. Although consistent with previous research, this fact is made all the more disturbing when one considers that the highest dropout rate is found in the smallest proportion of students in our junior and senior high school population. Futhermore, "the lower the socio-economic background of any given student, the lower the course level he or she is likely to end up in." (Watson, 1987).

Job While Attending School - Less than half of the dropouts had part-time jobs averaging 20-25 hours of work per week while attending school. Only 7% found it necessary to work while attending school. The others "chose to work" in order to maintain their lifestyle by earning extra "pocket money".

Age When Left School - The average leaving age was 17.1 years, which represents 30 percent of the sample, followed by 18 years, representing 24 percent of the sample. The age factor is significant when considering that a 17 or 18 year old is sitting in a grade two years behind where he/she should be and with students who are much younger. This will be examined more closely in the following section. (See Diagram B)

AGE WHEN LEFT

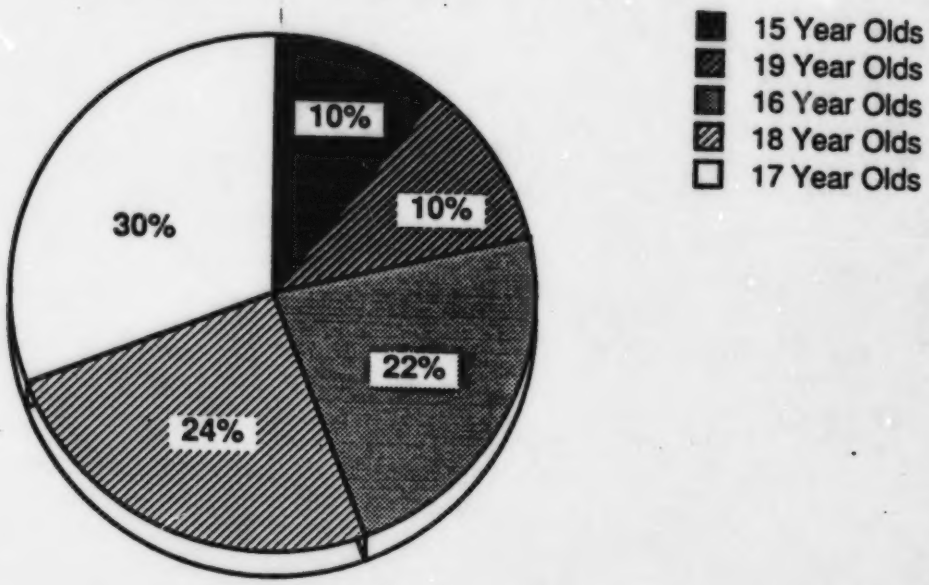


DIAGRAM B

This is not supported by most published research which claims that many students wait for and leave on. or shortly following, their 16th birthday. (Dryden, 1986).

GRADE LEFT - In the sample group of dropouts, over 80 percent had left senior high school, with thirty-seven percent of these students leaving while enrolled in grade ten. (See Diagram C)

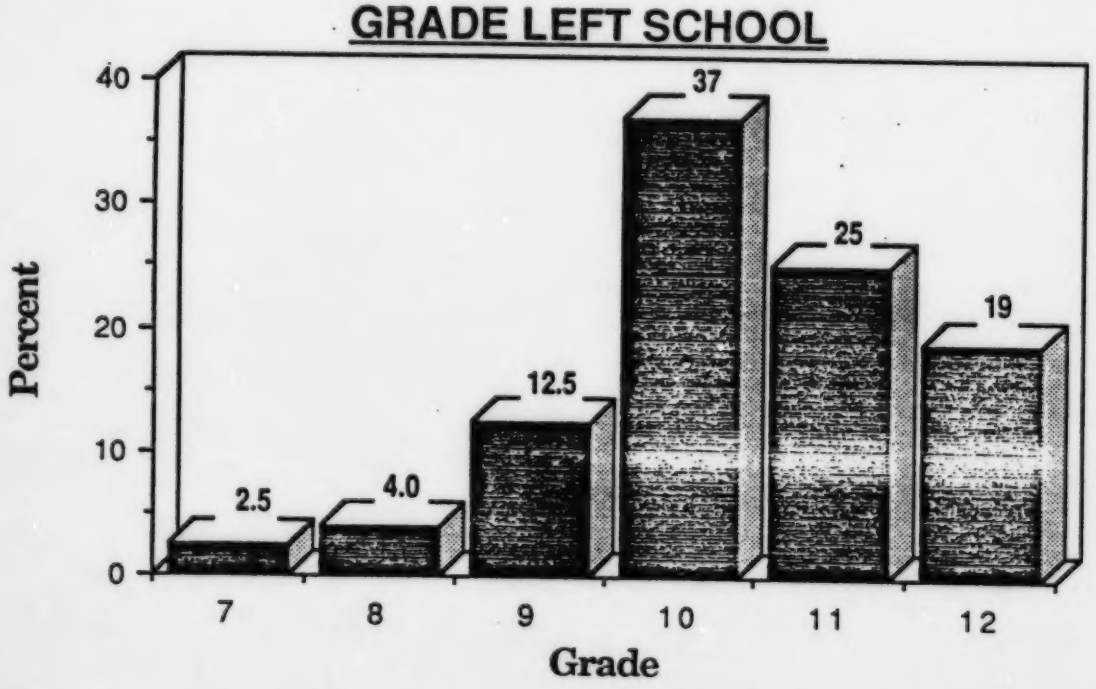


DIAGRAM C

Research supports this phenomenon but offers no commonly accepted explanation. (Hahn, 1987).

MONTH LEFT SCHOOL - The months of October, January and April were recorded as the three most popular times of the school year in which students left. Coincidently, in the two school districts involved in this study, these three months were also the time the home reports were distributed to the students. The home report for some dropouts just confirmed what they already knew and helped to make their decision a little easier. (See Diagram D)

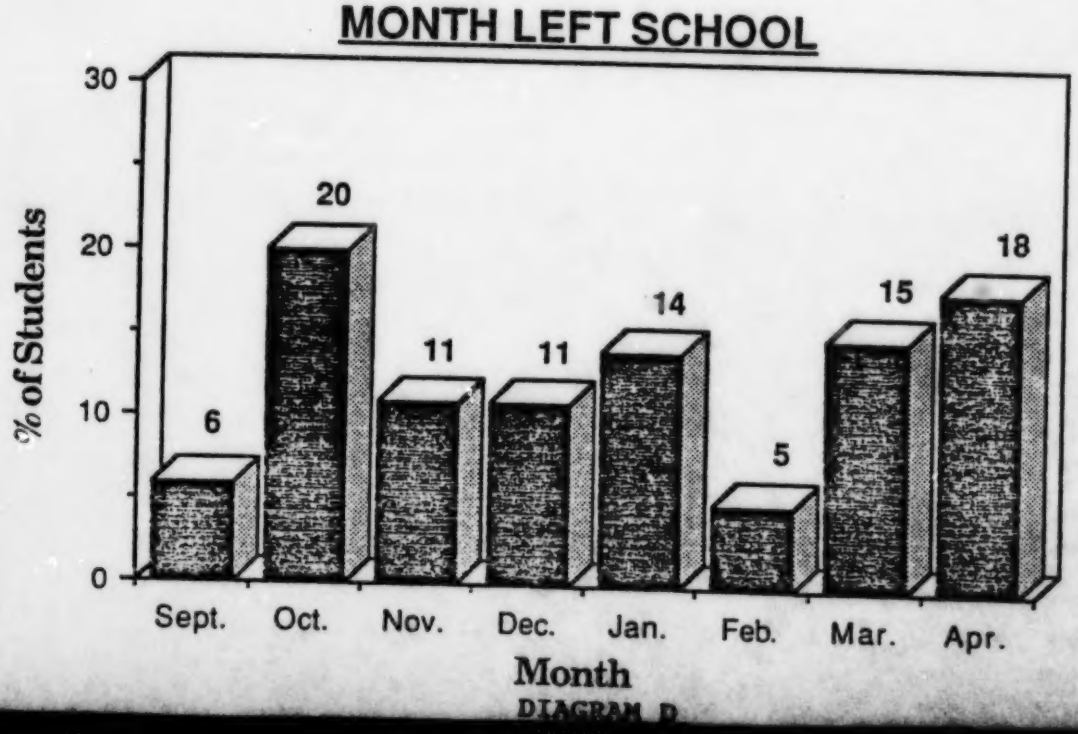


DIAGRAM D

Other Characteristics

The student who drops out of school is not likely to be the type of individual to seek advice or help from within his or her school. Twenty-nine percent said they spoke with a guidance counsellor, and 14 percent with school administration, while only 10 percent discussed their decision with a teacher. On the other hand friends (66%) and/or parents/guardian (53%) were most often consulted by the dropouts before they officially withdrew. Most received similar advice from these various groups, "to stay and stick it out".

To assess the choice to leave school as an "informed choice" really depends on one's point of view. If viewed from within the educational realm, the answer would be "no", especially when an alarming 19 percent of the sample did not speak with anyone concerning their decision to leave. As one dropout commented, "I decided to leave one day and left the next."

Also, 22 percent of these "silent leavers" said that to their knowledge, no one from the school contacted them after they left the building.

It is recommended that:

> 2. all schools be required to make contact within four weeks with all students who drop out of school during the school year or who fail to return in the fall, and try to persuade them to reconsider or explain the opportunities to re-enter school at a later date.

It was clear that the dropouts examined were not the type of students to be involved in any school-sponsored extra-curricular activities. Except for minimal participation in sports and drama, 86 percent had not taken part in any extra-curricular activities within the last two years. This is consistent with other studies that show these activities are considered by the dropout as only for "jocks" and "brains". (Radwanski 1988, Cashion-MacIver 1987)

The most surprising characteristic that this study revealed is that 58 percent have dropped out of school, have returned, and then dropped out again. This essentially makes them "double dropouts". Most have dropped out the second time for similar reasons to the first. This obviously gives the school, as well as the student, a second chance to do better than before....but to this end, neither is currently being very successful.

Other studies have shown that of the 40 percent of dropouts that return to finish their education, only 30 percent are successful in doing so. (King, 1986)

In light of the data presented thus far, some attempt will be made here to partly answer the question, "Who Are They?":

> A dropout most likely will be male, 16 to 18 years old, living at home, and at the lower end of the socio-economic ladder. Most likely he will be a "double-dropout", with marginal or failing marks registered in a level 3 program at the senior high level or a modified program at the junior high level. He will most often leave school in grade 10 or 11 in the months of October, January or March. He will most likely not take advantage of extra-curricular activities and will probably seek advice outside the school before leaving.

Considering intervention and prevention strategies in terms of the previous definition, it is recommended that:

3. an effective personalized orientation program be initiated at the senior high level to ease the transition from junior to senior high with emphasis on the availability of student programmes and services.

4. a concentrated effort be initiated or intensified to contact all failing or marginal students immediately following the distribution of the first home report, especially in grades 10 and 11.

5. these same students be offered in-depth skills, tutoring and other remediation services.

DISTANCE FROM SCHOOL - An additional bit of information obtained from the findings was that in this large geographical area, the dropout lived an average of 12.7 km. from his or her school. This is not really noteworthy, except for the fact that a good many of these former students do not live within walking distance, and are therefore bussed many kilometres to and from school each day. It may also suggest that for many of the dropouts, since their school was "out of sight - out of mind", there exists a lack of personal commitment from these students when the school is not part of the immediate community in which they live.

SECTION III

WHY ARE THEY NOT IN SCHOOL?

The answer to this question cannot be expressed in singular form. Rather, the dropout phenomenon is a multifaceted condition. (Hahn, 1987) It may start early, become complicated and cause regression each year until the decision is made to leave school.

This study's sample population offered many reasons as to why they are not presently enrolled in an educational institution. Past studies, however, contain a common thread that enable researchers to examine these reasons together and present them in a seemingly organized fashion.

The most common and obvious reason for leaving school early was present and past academic performance. Thirty-eight percent said they were failing three or more courses at the time they left school. Their history of school failure supports their claim. (Cashion, McIver 1987) Forty-three percent have repeated at least one grade while 28 percent have repeated two grades, and a striking 17 percent repeated three or more grades. It must also be noted that 12 percent of the dropouts did not repeat grades in the past and were passing with decent marks in most subjects when they left. The following graph shows which grades were repeated. (See Diagram E)

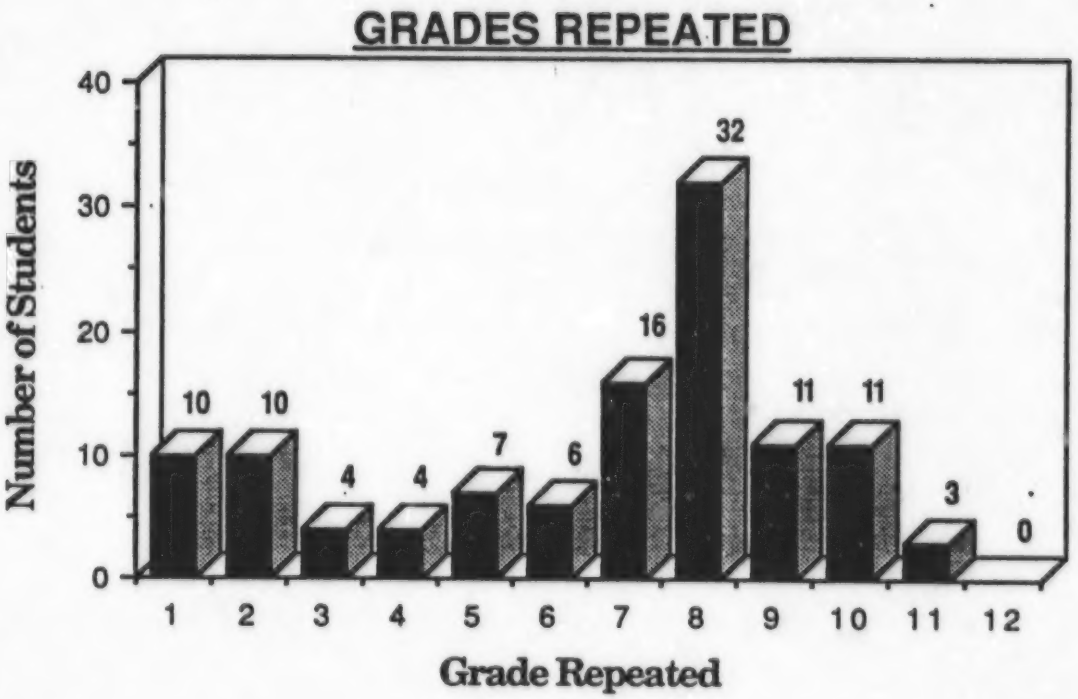

GRADES REPEATED
Number of Students
40
30
20
10
0
10
10
4
4
7
6
16
32
11
11
3
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
Grade Repeated

DIAGRAM E

It is interesting to note that over 75 percent of the dropouts repeated at least one grade at the junior high level. Grade 8 led the way with 41 percent, followed by grade 7, with 20 percent of the dropouts having to repeat that year. Thirteen percent repeated grades one or two respectively.

Repeating one or more grades in school has multiple negative effects. Studies have indicated that students who have been held back a grade are up to four times more likely to dropout than those who have never been held back. Other educators state that many of the students retained have low opinions of themselves and appear to have fewer friends. (Danzberger, Lefkowitz 1987)

The obvious effect of retention is being "too old" for the class. A total of 63 percent of the dropouts reported that they were older than the majority of their classmates. This again is supported by comments such as "I just didn't feel like I fit in" and "I didn't belong there". Reflecting on the data, it is recommended that:

6. junior high schools give increased attention to the issue of grade promotion and retention.

7. that a career-life counselling program be implemented at the grade seven level and continue through to grade 12. The Junior High Health Career Guidance pilot project developed by the province is an example.

The second most popular reason cited by dropouts for leaving school could be categorized under Student/Teacher Administration conflict. Twenty-six percent of the study group reported personality conflicts or unfair treatment by teachers and staff. At this time many suggestions could be offered to try and improve student-teacher relationships but these would go well beyond the scope of this paper. However, a good many students need to learn more than just what the curriculum offers, and thus, teachers need to teach more than just the curriculum in our schools. Posterski in his book The Emerging Generation puts the idea of humanizing education in perspective when he quotes a student's viewpoint: "I don't care how much you know-I need to know how much you care".

Students with poor attendance at school for whatever reason are more likely to drop out than those who attend school on a regular basis. Poor attendance most often is accompanied by loss of interest and poor grades. Illness accounts for a small percentage of the cases, but the majority seem to be saying "school is not for me". When asked to describe their attendance before leaving school, 64 percent said it was "poor". The person responsible for daily attendance, usually the homeroom teacher, must be aware of this fact.

Any prolonged, unexplained absence by a student should be acted on immediately before it goes beyond the point of no return for the student. The larger the school, the easier it is for a student to be overlooked with respect to attendance.

This study supports the findings of the Cashion-MacIver Study with 25 percent of dropouts saying that they lost interest or found their subjects irrelevant to their future goals. A few of these students reported the boring, day to day routine of school was "really getting to them".

Another reason offered by the dropouts was the denial of their requests in school to change courses or teachers or to switch levels of study. Thirteen percent said they probably would have stayed if their request had been granted. Research does not report this as a separate factor. However, it could easily be included under student/teacher administration conflicts.

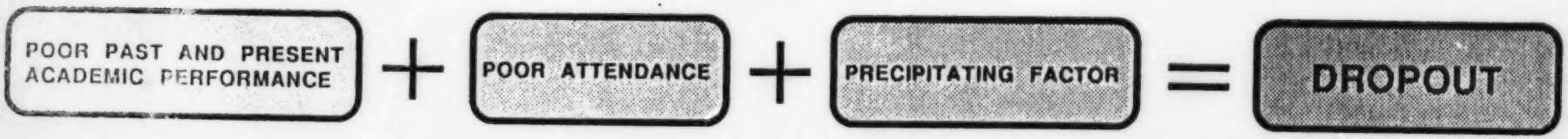
Only 9 percent of the dropouts were suspended at least once within the last eight months of their stay, with half finally being expelled for the remainder of the school year. This low number clearly shows that the vast majority of the dropouts were not considered "troublemakers" within the system.

The attractiveness of increased hours and consequently more money through part-time and full-time employment was recorded by 10 percent of the dropouts as a strong deterrent to staying in school.

Other reasons offered by the dropouts included depression (3%), overcrowding (4%), no friends in school (5%), parenting responsibilities (8%) and pregnancy (6%).

When asked if their decision to leave school was based on one event or incident that happened just prior to leaving, 64 percent said "yes". It was found through counselling these former students that this response may be based on fact or simply perceived in the minds of the dropouts. Responses included such incidents as receiving their home report, arguments with teachers, being caught jigging school, being caught smoking, emotional stress, wrong level of study, peer relationship problems, teacher expectations, fear of crowds, homework, and suggestions to leave school "in the student's best interest". However, whether these responses are real or fiction in the minds of these dropouts, the end result is the same - they are not attending school.

COMMON DROPOUT SCENARIO



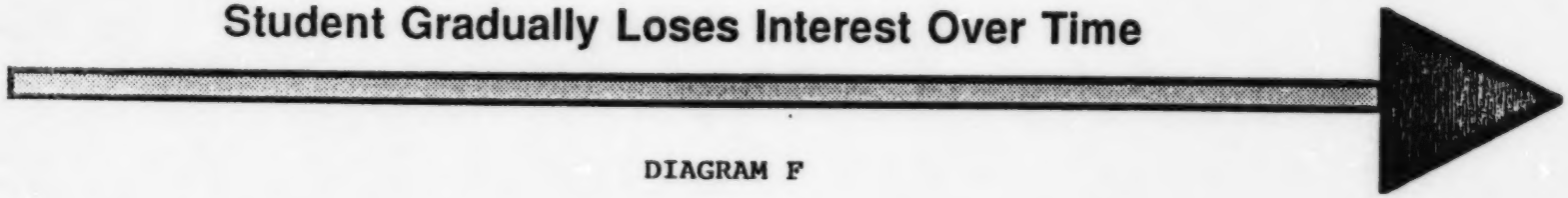


DIAGRAM F

For the purpose of identification and subsequent intervention of "high risk" students, a typical scenario seems to surface from the major factors that cause premature school leaving. This scenario would not be applicable to every student who has left or will leave school in the future, but would adequately describe the majority of the dropouts involved in this study. (See Diagram F)

If this scenario holds true for many who have left school, and when over 80 percent of the reasons offered by dropouts are considered to be school related, then it allows a number of intervention and prevention opportunities while the student is still in the system. This reinforces the responsibility of the schools to take action first, while the student is readily available, rather than implementing programs and measures to try and lure the dropout back to school. For some dropouts, it is much too late for remedial incentives.

Attitudes Toward School

The aspect of being with "friends" led the list of what dropouts liked the most when they were in school and miss the most now that they are out. This was clear in their minds and made very evident in personal interviews.

Vocational and business courses that seemed to relate to the real world of work were popular with this group, as were some of the teachers in these subject areas. Mathematics was also highly regarded as useful by the dropouts. (Cashion-MacIver 1987)

The dropout often stated that teachers and school administrators were what they disliked most about their school experience. Further investigation revealed that most of these teachers were involved with generally unpopular compulsory subject areas such as Science, History and French, making it difficult to distinguish which subject was disliked the least. Finally, some students felt that they were stereo-typed by the staff and the school either by the program they were following or by the way they looked or dressed.

This data is supported by other Canadian studies that address the dropout. (Cashion-MacIver 1987: Radwanski 1988; and King 1986)

When asked "What should school teach students today?", 29 percent said that they thought school was doing an "OK" job now. Not surprisingly, many felt that more attention should be payed to teaching life and job skills related directly to what they needed to know to gain employment following high school. Other responses in this area ranged from sex education courses to hairdressing and beauty culture courses, to be offered at the senior high school level.

In response to the question, "Did you give up long before you left?", 65 percent said "Yes", approximately six to eight weeks before. Again, this wait-time does allow the school sufficient time to identify and intervene with this high risk population. On the other hand, the remaining 35 percent who leave school on a "last minute" or "last straw" basis offer little chance for the system to make a remedial effort.

SECTION IV

WHAT ARE THEY DOING NOW?

At the time of the survey, close to 60 percent of the dropouts were employed, mostly at minimum wage salaries. However, as reported earlier, less than half had part-time jobs while attending school, and these did so as a matter of "choice", rather than necessity. Most of the dropouts have taken the same or similar-type employment that they held part-time while in school. Generally speaking, nearly all dropouts employed are dissatisfied with their present job and passively comment that it will do until something better comes along.

Others interviewed who were unemployed were playing the "waiting game" for the next job interview, the next unemployment cheque or the next school year to begin.

Three students have returned to school since the time of this survey.

FUTURE PLANS

When asked what they see themselves doing in twelve months time, the majority have verbally committed themselves to returning to school and somehow finishing their diploma. In addition, approximately 15% have allowed this investigator to register them in the school of their choice for September,

1988. Others see themselves continuing to work while earning credits through the services of the New Brunswick Community College system. A good many were unaware of the services and alternatives available to them to continue their education and were grateful for the information. Again, this confirmed the notion that dropouts generally have made an "uninformed choice" with respect to leaving school. Further, the fact that they have dropped out of public school does not mean that they feel their education has stopped.

Four students showed keen interest in starting their own businesses and have since been directed to the appropriate people or programs.

Day care, financial incentives, being able to choose teachers/levels, and night school for older students were among the more popular suggestions that the dropouts had to offer to entice more early school leavers to return to school. Since 14 percent of females in this study reported leaving school because of parenting responsibilities and pregnancy, it is recommended that:

> 8. the districts investigate the feasibility of setting up day-care programs in conjunction with the home economics department in the local high schools to help in meet the educational needs of these students.

SECTION V

OBSERVATIONS

For the most part, this group of former students strongly regret their decision to leave school. For many, social life has come to a stand-still with the majority of their friends still in school. All but one dropout clearly advise other potential school leavers to reconsider and "stick it out". Two dropouts even offered to talk to anyone who was considering leaving school.

Most disheartening was the fact that 54 percent of the dropouts surveyed thought that the school could have done something to help or prevent them from leaving school. For some, simply someone to talk to would have sufficed. Their perspective, apparently, shifts the burden of responsibility from the shoulder of the individual to that of the system. This is not to say that dramatic expensive changes need to be made, but rather that certain elements focusing on intervention and prevention within the system need to be re-addressed. A few recommendations in this vein have already been presented. Additional recommendations include the following:

9. The implementation or continuation of a peer tutor/ counsellor program at the junior and senior high level.

10. The continuation of staff development on "Effective Teaching" with increased emphasis on the humanizing aspect of education, combined with the pedagogy.

11. The provision of a temporary leave of absence for a specified period of time for students with severe personal or family problems in order to prevent permanent withdrawal from school.

12. Increased involvement with community-based resources to enhance classroom learning through job shadowing, information materials, organized tours, invited speakers, summer employment, etc. to increase the student's understanding of the world of work.

13. A public awareness program that specifically addresses the dropout situation be made available to students, parents, teachers, and administrators and trustees both in the local and provincial sectors.

14. An explicit statement be made that the goal of educational policy is to have all students continue in high school until graduation.

15. The Department of Education continue to fund pilot projects, i.e. alternate schools, to allow a specific population of students the opportunity to finish school.

6. An early intervention program beginning at age three be examined at the provincial level to assist "at risk students" from disadvantaged homes.

17. The "CHOICES" program be scheduled for all Grade 10 students early in the school year, starting with level 3 and 4 students.

SECTION VI

SUMMARY

The first aim of this study was to identify the dropout and examine the critical factors which cause premature school leaving.

The definition offered earlier does attempt to describe the typical dropout involved in this study and may be used only for general identification of "high-risk" students in the system.

The same may be said for the illustrated scenario described in Section III. Most who left school had past or present academic difficulties and over time began to gradually lose interest in attending school on a regular basis. The attendance issue is most commonly referred to as an "effect" rather than a "cause" of early school leaving. However, being away from school for too long requires the students first to account for their unexplained absence and second to face the never ending game of "catch-up" while at the same time attending to the regular work. This is an insurmountable task for many students and, in this context, not attending school finally reaches a point of "no return". For others who attend on a fairly regular basis, it only takes one or two incidents or events, either school-related or not, to confirm their decision to leave.

The second aim was to assess the decision to leave school as being an "informed" choice. The interviews suggested that this was not the case for the majority of dropouts, who expressed the view that intervention from within the system to perhaps reverse their decision to leave or to offer other educational alternatives was not given.

Finally, through direct counselling, it was possible to register twelve dropouts in school for the fall of 1988, set up four interviews with the local community college and direct seven others to job-training and further counselling at Employment and Immigration Canada. All dropouts interviewed received a 13/19 brochure listing all available community resources and their corresponding telephone numbers.

There are those who would argue that school <u>is not</u> the place for some students and further claim that these students would not survive as students in any system. However, if students constantly experience failure and lose interest in what our schools have to offer, then we can expect them to leave before graduation at great personal and social cost.

From poor academic performance to repeated suspensions and detentions, from poor attendance to student-teacher conflicts, the list of risk factors is depressing. However, we can now identify the critical elements that foreshadow the decision to drop out, and this alone is reason for optimism. Response to these difficulties early enough may allow hundreds of students the opportunity to graduate in the years ahead.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consideration be given to having one standarized student withdrawal form used by all schools and school districts in the province of New Brunswick.

2. All schools be required to make contact within four weeks with all students who drop out of school during the school year or who fail to return in the fall, and try to persuade them to reconsider or explain the opportunities to re-enter school at a later date.

3. An effective personalized orientation program be initiated at the senior high level to ease the transition from junior to senior high with emphasis on the availability of student programmes and services.

4. A concentrated effort be initiated or intensifed to contact all failing or marginal students immediately following the distribution of the first home report, especially in grades 10 and 11.

5. These same students be offered in-depth study skills, tutoring and other remediation services.

6. Junior high schools give increased attention to the issue of grade promotion and retention.

7. A career-life counselling program be implemented at the grade seven level and continue through to grade 12. The Junior High Health Career Guidance pilot project developed by the province is an example.

8. The districts investigate the feasibility of setting up day care programs in conjunction with the home economics department in the local high schools to help in meeting the educational needs of these students.

9. The implementation or continuation of a peer tutor/ counsellor program at the junior and senior high level.

10. The continuation of staff development on "Effective Teaching" with increased emphasis on the humanizing aspect of education, combined with the pedagogy.

11. The provision of a temporary leave of absence for a specified period of time for students with severe personal or family problems in order to prevent permanent withdrawal from school.

12. Increased involvement with community-based resources to enhance classroom learning through job shadowing, information materials, organized tours, invited speakers, summer employment, etc. to increase the student's understanding of the world of work.

13. A public awareness program that specifically addresses the dropout situation be made available to students, parents, teachers, and administrators and trustees both in the local and provincial sectors.

14. An explicit statement be made that the goal of educational policy is to have all students continue in high school until graduation.

15. The Department of Education continue to fund pilot projects, e.g. alternate schools to allow a specific population of students the opportunity to finish school.

16. An early intervention program beginning at age three be examined at the provincial level to assist at risk-students from disadvantaged homes.

17. The "CHOICES" program be scheduled for all Grade 10 students early in the school year, starting with level 3 and 4 students.

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APPENDIX A

1987-1988

DRAFT III

QUESTIONNAIRE

DISTRICT 18 & 19 SCHOOL DROPOUT STUDY

1. NAME: _____

   ADDRESS: _____

   _____

   D.O.B.: _____ PHONE: _____

   CURRENT AGE: _____ AGE WHEN LEFT: _____

   SEX: M ___ F _____

   LAST GRADE COMPLETED _____

   LEFT SCHOOL IN GRADE _____ WHEN? (MONTH) _____

   ENGLISH SUBJECT LEVEL _____ LAST SCHOOL: _____

2. GRADE REPEATED (if applicable)_____

3. MOTHER'S OCCUPATION _____

   MOTHER'S EDUCATION _____

4. FATHER'S OCCUPATION _____

   FATHER'S EDUCATION _____

5. SINGLE PARENT HOME _____

6. DISTANCE AWAY FROM SCHOOL _____KM.

7. WHILE IN SCHOOL, WERE YOU INVOLVED IN ANY EXTRA-CURRICULAR SPORTS OR SCHOOL RELATED ACTIVITIES?

   _____

8. DID YOU HAVE A PART-TIME JOB WHILE ATTENDING SCHOOL?_____ IF YES, HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK? _____. WAS IT NECESSARY FOR YOU TO WORK? _____

9. ARE YOU WORKING NOW? _____

10. LIVING WITH: PARENTS _____
FRIENDS _____
RELATIVES _____

11. WHAT DID YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT SCHOOL? _____

_____

12. WHAT DID YOU LIKE THE LEAST? _____

_____

13. WHO WAS MOST INFLUENTIAL IN CHOOSING THE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM YOU FOLLOWED? (if applicable)

YOURSELF _____
PARENT/GUARDIAN _____
JUNIOR HIGH TEACHER _____
GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR _____
FRIENDS/RELATIVES _____

14. HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY LEFT SCHOOL AND RETURNED? _____
IF SO, WHY DID YOU INITIALLY LEAVE AND WHY DID YOU RETURN?

_____

_____

15. DESCRIBE YOUR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL BEFORE YOU LEFT?
GOOD _____ AVERAGE _____ POOR _____

16. WERE YOU SUSPENDED/EXPELLED? _____
IF YES, NUMBER OF TIMES? _____

17. WERE YOU OLDER, YOUNGER OR ABOUT THE SAME AGE AS YOUR CLASSMATES? _____

18. PRIOR TO LEAVING SCHOOL, DID YOU DISCUSS IT WITH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING?

NONE	_____
PARENTS	_____
TEACHER	_____
GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR	_____
PRINCIPAL/VICE	_____
FRIENDS	_____
BOY/GIRL FRIEND	_____

WHAT WAS THEIR REACTION? _____

_____

19. WERE YOU WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN BEFORE LEAVING SCHOOL? (i.e. change course) _____ _____

_____

20. WAS YOUR DECISION TO LEAVE SCHOOL BASED ON <u>ONE EVENT</u> OR <u>INCIDENT</u> THAT HAPPENED JUST PRIOR TO LEAVING? (i.e argument with teacher) _____

_____

21. ASKING ANOTHER WAY, COULD YOU STATE A SPECIFIC REASON YOU LEFT SCHOOL IN FIVE WORDS OR LESS.

_____

22. COULD THE SCHOOL HAVE DONE SOMETHING AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME TO HAVE ALLOWED YOU TO STAY? _____

_____

23. DID YOU "GIVE UP" IN SCHOOL LONG BEFORE YOU LEFT OR WAS IT A LAST MINUTE DECISION? _____

_____

24. WHAT WOULD YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO IS THINKING OF LEAVING SCHOOL?

STAY _____
QUIT _____
OTHER _____

25. WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST THAT SCHOOLS COULD OFFER THAT WOULD ALLOW YOU TO RETURN IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

_____

_____

26. WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT SCHOOL SHOULD TEACH STUDENTS TODAY?_____

_____

27. PICTURE YOURSELF TWELVE MONTHS FROM TODAY. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE DOING?

_____

_____